



St Anthony's Homework Policy

June 2015

This policy has been developed by the St Anthony's staff and is based on key research findings on homework literature from around the world including the NSW Department of Education and Training Homework Guidelines 2012. (See the appendix for further details.)

Preface

The Effectiveness of Homework

A common rationale for the provision of homework is to improve achievement. While improved achievement does correlate with homework in the later years of schooling, research suggests that such benefits are not significant in the primary years, (ie. Kindergarten to Year 6).

A review of the research literature concerning homework reveals the following main points about the effectiveness of homework in raising achievement at primary school (Kindergarten to Year 6) level. Eminent educational researcher and advisor to numerous national educational bodies, Dr John Hattie, has conducted many meta-analyses on what provides the greatest effect size on learning. Through his comprehensive study of five meta-analyses, that capture 161 separate studies involving over 100,000 students, he found that homework, as a way of improving primary student learning outcomes, rated at only 0.15 - a very low effect. Secondary student's homework rated at 0.29 - which is still considered a relatively small effect size. Dr Hattie considers that any effect that will genuinely improve student outcomes should be 0.4 or higher. Homework therefore, has limited additional value in the primary school years however appears to have greater effect on outcomes as children grow older - that is, homework does not translate to higher achievement until secondary school.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg (2004), an Australian adolescent psychologist, says that homework is not a means to ensure success and there is no significant evidence to support the idea that it lifts standards. *"Schools continue to advance the notion that homework is somehow a means to ensure success. This is a furphy."* Many researchers, teachers and parents agree that student learning would be better enhanced by exercising, socialising and taking part in family activities.

Research undertaken by the NSW Department of Education and Communities in 2012 also supported the above assertions, that *"there is little consensus in the literature as to whether homework raises student achievement. Most researchers, however, conclude that for primary students, there is no evidence that homework lifts academic performance."*

Purpose of Homework

In light of the above research, working at home should not be seen as a chore and children should see it as an extension of their learning. We would encourage families to spend quality time talking together and experiencing a wide range of activities that promote wonder and inquiry. Working at home will then vary in duration and frequency according to the age, interests and physical condition of the individual child. As such **no set homework time is identified**. However, we see reading as vital to a child's progress and development and recommend reading regularly with/and to your child regardless of age or reading capability.

Home tasks set by teachers should:

- Be purposeful and related to current or future class work;
- Be regular, that is provided each week, although the work set may be each night, each week, each month etc;
- Communicate to the child that learning takes place outside of school as well as inside;
- Promote positive attitudes about school and learning;
- Be balanced with family commitments and domestic structures;
- Help to establish and consolidate learning skills especially reading, counting and multiplication tables;
- Be stimulating but not too complex;
- Have a clear goal, and be well explained and clearly understood;
- Show variety (ie tasks could be physical, creative, verbal, not just reading and writing tasks);
- Be reviewed in class, where appropriate, so that the student receives quick feedback while it is still fresh in his or her mind and be suited, where possible, to individual needs.

Examples of Home Learning for Kindergarten-Year 2

Working at home, at this level, should predominantly be literacy-related, particularly reading related and rich discussion. Students will be provided with appropriate home readers and sight words but also encouraged to read more widely eg library books and other material at home. Students may also participate in some practical mathematical activities especially around counting, sequencing and measuring. Tasks not completed at school may also be asked to be finished at home.

Examples of Home Learning for Years 3-4

Working at home, at this level, should be mostly literacy-related. Students will be asked to read widely from sources like, the school or public library. Students may be expected to work more independently depending on their stage of development. Students will be encouraged to practise mathematical concepts learnt at school especially times tables, number facts and problem solving activities that help students see Mathematics at work in their world. Simple investigations involving other Key Learning Areas, especially Science and Human Society & Its Environment, may also be used to reinforce learning through the use of everyday contexts. Home research assignments or projects may also be set. Tasks not completed at school may also be asked to be finished at home.

Examples of Home Learning for Years 5-6

Working at home, at this level, should be mostly literacy-related. Students will be asked to read widely from sources like, the school or public library. Students would be expected to work more independently depending on the type of activity. Students will be encouraged to practise mathematical concepts learnt at school especially times tables, number facts and problem solving activities that help students see Mathematics at work in their world. More complex investigations, assignments or projects using inquiry-based approaches and, involving other Key Learning Areas especially Science and Human Society & Its Environment, may also be

used to reinforce learning through the use of everyday contexts. Tasks not completed at school may also be asked to be finished at home.

Consequences for Non-completion of Homework

Teachers will encourage all students to complete their home learning activities and parents should ensure that their children are involved in regular reading and number work. Students will however not be given *punishments* for non completion of homework.

Role of Teachers

- Set appropriate home learning tasks for students;
- Communicate the expectations of the task so students have a clear understanding;
- Provide feedback to the student especially on assignments, investigations and projects;

Role of Students

- Ensure he/she takes home whatever material is required;
- Complete prescribed assignments, investigations and or projects;
- Seek help from their parent and or teacher if they are having difficulty;

Role of Parents

While most students should not need the help of parents when they complete homework, parents do have a role to play. They should:

- Allow their child ample time to play and engage in other informal activities vital for each child's healthy development. (Remember that learning the balance between work and play is a lifelong skill.);
- Create a home environment that facilitates the student's homework;
- Offer help only when such help is clearly required;
- Encourage effort rather than achievement;
- Report any difficulties to the teacher, including difficulty of work and excessive time taken;
- Assist in accessing websites for research or if they wish to provide their children with extra on-line tasks;
- Check their child's tasks;

Use of Diaries

Diaries are an important part of the home learning process as well as developing self-responsibility for older students. All students in years 5 & 6 will be issued with a diary at the beginning of the year. These are used to inform both students and parents of home learning tasks as well as communicate directly with parents.

Projects & Assignments

The term 'project', means an assignment, task, investigation, activity or presentation, that:

- is primarily completed out of class;
- is set on a specific topic;
- involves research from books or the internet, note-taking and presentation of that information in a suitable and appropriate fashion;

Resources

The following are great family based activities which help to promote creativity, literacy, numeracy and love of learning:

- Reading regularly with a parent/adult.
- Telling the time
- Shopping and using money.
- Family outings e.g to a gallery, museum, place of interest, walks
- Playing board games & completing jigsaw puzzles.
- Undertaking individual research for a project.
- Being a member of a sports club or youth organisation.
- Playing imaginative games.
- Cooking, gardening, making things.
- Playing word games
- Crosswords & Sudokus
- Ensuring children have regular opportunities to: cut, glue, stick, colour, paint, draw, make models.
- Fostering a love of playing music.
- Learning number facts and tables.
- Playing games that develop physical skills.
- Building models e.g. Lego, blocks, K'nex.

Suggestions for additional on-line activities

There are many websites available to parents wishing to provide extra activities for their children. Some of these include:

www.smartkiddies.com.au

www.teachingonline.org/homeworkindex.html

www.daisymaths.com.au

www.promtheanplanet.com

www.abc.net.au/countusin

www.nzmaths.co.nz

www.copacabana-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

www.coolmaths4kids.com

www.mathsisfun.com

www.apples4theteacher.com

www.tale.edu.au

References & Appendix

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/homework/Hwk_Pol_guide.pdf

<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Instruction/What-research-says-about-the-value-of-homework-At-a-glance>

<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Instruction/What-research-says-about-the-value-of-homework-At-a-glance/Homework-Research-QA.html>

<http://headguruteacher.com/2012/10/21/homework-what-does-the-hattie-research-actually-say/>

Hattie, J, Visible Learning - 'A Synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement', Routledge 2008